Transsexualism & Saturnine Chaos

It seems that, in most current spiritual and esoteric spaces, there is often an aversion to transsexualism and transgenderism, an assertion that such things are current and somehow 'unnatural'/spiritually harmful. While it stands to be reasoned that transsexualism as an attempt to fully change one's sex/negate one's natal sex is both modern and an impossible feat, it does not hold that transsexualism as the acquisition of opposite sex characteristics is harmful at all. Indeed, androgyny and hermaphroditism (innate or acquired) in this sense is of a deep spiritual importance and is often a goal in of itself, the difference being that transsexualism manifests it bodily, rather than in a purely psychic/spiritual way.

The erotic and spiritual dimensions of androgyny are widely recognised in pre-modern eras, especially in the form of youthful male effeminacy. In Greek religion alone, Hermaphroditus (derived from the earlier Aphroditus) exists as one of the Erotes, and while he is often flattened to being a god merely of intersexual conditions, he is more accurately also a god of male effeminacy/androgyny, as well as fertility and the Moon. His rites involved cross-dressing of the men and women involved, and it was believed that his dual-sexed nature gave him extensive powers over fertility and marriage, whether said nature was innate or later gained through Salmacis.

It is also then, perhaps noteworthy that Dionysus and Adonis are both titled with the epithet Ἀνδρόγυνος, Androgynos, due to their taking of both the active and passive sexual roles depending on if they were intimate with a woman or a man. Dionysus, similarly to Hermaphroditus, is also linked to ritualistic cross-dressing but via myth, as seen when he encourages Pentheus to dress as a woman to infiltrate the Maenads and their sacred rites. Adonis, as a classical ideal of male beauty, being described as Androgynos is especially interesting, as it seems to suggest that a degree of femaleness/femininity is desirable in males for the sake of beauty.

While it might seem natural to also mention here Attis and his priests in the Galli, and indeed many modern scholars seem keen to reinterpret Attis and the Galli (sometimes Hermaphroditus and Dionysus too) as 'transgender', the closer truth seems to instead be that Attis and the Galli represent a negation of the male, rather than a coexistence of male and female as exists in the prior figures. As the castration of Ouranos was a de-masculinisation of the god, so too does the castration of Attis and the Galli follow the same vein.

Rather than the Galli being outcasts for being 'transgender', or violating Greek or Roman gender norms, their status as foreigners and the shame implicit in harming male genitals (as seen via Greco-Roman views on the circumcisions of Jews, and the outlawing of castration by Hadrian) seems the larger component here. Indeed, effeminacy in young males subjected to pederasty was usually viewed as a positive, erotically appealing trait, as seen in the descriptions of the boys as "puer delicatus" (delicate boys), and "deliciae" (delights).

Later on, such hermaphroditism would become a very significant goal within alchemy. Traditionally, the prima materia (or chaos) where the elements merged into an indistinguishable mass was separated with nigredo (putrefaction), and was further purified with albedo. During the albedo process, the White Queen and the Red King would emerge, representative of the feminine forces of the Moon, and the masculine forces of the Sun

respectively. Then, in the final alchemical stage (rubedo, with citrinitas being a later development), these two forces would merge (coincidentia oppositorum) into Rebis, the divine hermaphrodite, or more directly, the Sun-Moon Child (infans solaris lunaris). Hermaphroditism is, then, quite literally the ultimate goal of alchemy, the point where the magnum opus/Great Work is fully realised.

This alchemical thought process would also heavily influence Carl Jung, who was known to study alchemy. In his psychological theories of archetypes and the establishment of the self, part of the development of individuation is the cultivation of the anima/animus, representative of the inner feminine for men, and the inner masculine for women. The faculties are held to be beneficial in of themselves, that a man developing his femininity and a woman developing her masculinity impart important traits, so long as they do not usurp the ego, but both of which necessitate some degree of psychic androgyny.

With all of these examples, it appears fairly overwhelming that the coincidence of male and female in one person is deeply important as a spiritual goal. The major legitimate exceptions seem to be spiritual paths that revolve around 'fertility', or 'polarity'. Rather than the hermaphrodite being viewed as a symbol of fertility and polarity as in Hermaphroditus, such paths (such as some forms of Wicca/Neopaganism) will sometimes view transsexualism/hermaphroditism as a violation of these central concepts, as well as homosexuality for similar reasons.

However, most spiritual paths do not have such reasoning. Transsexualism is discounted wholesale, argued to violate some ideological delineation, or some supposed 'natural' order. The reason for this, esoterically, seems to be that transsexualism is itself a manifestation of Chaos, of that pre-divided potential from which everything comes. It is redolent of the dangerous, the unknowable, and also the erotic, and thus threatens the neat abstractions that their systems seek to build.

This is because transsexualism is, intrinsically, a category violation. The lines between man and woman are fundamentally blurred when someone exhibits traits of both sexes, and it results in a violation of categories that most believe to be innate and unchanging, that of sex. In the modern day, some handwave it as not existing, a transsexual is merely their natal sex after all, yet their behaviour towards transsexuals, viewing them as somehow uniquely decadent or deplorable, reveals a more hidden knowing. Transition marks them in some way, they are indeed not merely a typical member of their natal sex, they are changed and observers know it, if they will consciously recognise this or not.

At the same time, it seems many transsexuals themselves are eager to deny this very font of power. They are merely women in men's bodies or vice versa, and physical transition is simply a way to fulfil this 'inner' reality, or a way for them to 'treat' their 'condition' of gender dysphoria. Much as homosexuals seek to domesticate their more radical forms to appease heteronormative institutions, seeking assimilation into heterosexual structures via such things as gay marriage, so too do transsexuals seek to assimilate into cisnormativity. Bodies that align with sex stereotypes with sexual reassignment surgeries, legal recognition of a 'sex change', seeking heterosexual or homosexual partners to validate their gender identity.

Most transsexuals, however, who aren't lying to themselves recognise that they are not simply the opposite sex. The wrong body approach is a simplification, while there is an otherness that's felt as an internal incongruence, transition changes the landscape entirely.

For those who medically transition, and don’t become a statistic in the process, there is a an understanding that unfolds. The discomfort towards your natal sex fades, yet your trans identity persists. Rather than being based on negation (I am not male/female), or even change (I will become a female/woman/male/man), it becomes based on differentiation (I am trans, my experiences as trans are valuable themselves).

It is that very otherness, the separation from mundane maleness and femaleness, where the esoteric power of transsexualism lies. Males and females must seek each other to be fertile, fecund, yet the transsexual or androgyne need only consort with themselves. To be a hermaphrodite, born or constructed, is to become the Rebis. The hieros gamos sans gamos, Azoth overflowing, where male and female coexist, or more accurately merge into unity. To be as virile as a man, as delicate as a woman, and to manifest Chaos with your very being.

Vonixa Tiresia
ZLD, C.2364